



News Release

Cooperating with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
2301 N Cameron St, Rm G-19 · Harrisburg, PA 17110

Results of a recent survey are contained in this release. You can also find it on our site at www.nass.usda.gov/pa/ and click on the Pennsylvania Publications link.

Contact: Marc Tosiano, 717-787-3904
nass-pa@nass.usda.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tillage Practices Released

HARRISBURG, PA, July 2, 2008 -- USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Pennsylvania Field Office, has completed its second survey of tillage practices for field crops in the Commonwealth. The first survey was conducted in 2007. The tillage survey was funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. It was conducted in conjunction with NASS's annual June Agricultural Survey. In order to address the problem of highly erodible soil and soil compaction, many farmers have turned to no-till and minimum till practices. Until recently there were no survey based estimates of how many acres had been converted from conventional tillage practices to alternative methods. Over the past few years several industry groups, including the No-Till Alliance, Conservation Districts, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation have requested that NASS's Pennsylvania Field Office provide information on the tillage practices used in Pennsylvania.

In 2008, conventional tillage was used on 30% of the major crop acreage in Pennsylvania, up only slightly from the 29.2% recorded in 2007. No-till was practiced on 50% of the major crop acreage, and other conservation tillage practices were used on the remaining 20%. Corn and soybeans are the two crops with the highest acreages. Conventional till was used on 31% of the corn acreage, no-till was practiced on 48% of the acreage, and the remaining 21% of the corn acreage used other conservation tillage practices. In soybeans, conventional till was used on 20% of the acreage, no-till was practiced on 62% of the acreage, and the remaining 18% of the acreage was cultivated using other conservation tillage practices. Alfalfa seeding showed the biggest change, with 40% of the acres reported as being seeded using no-till practices.

Pennsylvania: Tillage Practices by Crop, 2008							
Crop	Total Acres Planted	No-Till ¹		Other Conservation Tillage ²		Conventional Till ³	
		Acres	% of Total ⁴	Acres	% of Total ⁴	Acres	% of Total ⁴
Corn	1,370,000	660,000	48	290,000	21	420,000	31
Soybeans	445,000	275,000	62	80,000	18	90,000	20
Barley	65,000	31,000	48	12,000	18	22,000	34
Winter Wheat ⁵	195,000	95,000	49	40,000	21	60,000	31
Oats	105,000	30,000	29	18,000	17	57,000	54
Total ⁶	2,180,000	1,091,000	50	440,000	20	649,000	30
Alfalfa Seedings ^{7/8}	-	-	40	-	20	-	40
¹ No-Till – A procedure whereby a crop is planted directly into a seedbed not tilled since harvest of a previous crop, or the planting of a crop into sod, previous crop stubble, or a cover where only the intermediate seed zone is disturbed. ² Other Conservation Tillage – Tillage practices prior to planting which result in a minimum of 30 percent ground cover or residue being retained on the surface following planting. Grass and weed control is accomplished primarily with herbicides. Includes ridge till, strip till, and mulch till. ³ Conventional Till – Systems where 100 percent of the surface is mixed or inverted by plowing, power tilling, or multiple disking. ⁴ Sum of no-till, other conservation tillage and conventional till percents of total may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. ⁵ Wheat seeded the previous fall for all intended purposes including grain, cover, silage, hay or any other utilization. ⁶ Total excludes Alfalfa Seedings. ⁷ New alfalfa seeded or to be seeded during 2008. ⁸ Alfalfa seeded acres will be available in January 2009.							

Pennsylvania: Tillage Practices by Crop, 2007							
Crop	Total Acres Planted	No-Till ¹		Other Conservation Tillage ²		Conventional Till ³	
		Acres	% of Total ⁴	Acres	% of Total ⁴	Acres	% of Total ⁴
Corn	1,450,000	720,000	49.7	310,000	21.4	420,000	29.0
Soybeans	440,000	280,000	63.6	70,000	15.9	90,000	20.5
Barley	60,000	24,000	40.0	19,000	31.7	17,000	28.3
Winter Wheat ⁵	170,000	75,000	44.1	40,000	23.5	55,000	32.4
Oats	120,000	30,000	25.0	18,000	15.0	72,000	60.0
Total ⁶	2,240,000	1,129,000	50.4	457,000	20.4	654,000	29.2
Alfalfa Seedings ^{7/8}	100,000	21,400	21.4	21,400	21.4	57,100	57.1
Grand Total ⁹	2,340,000	1,150,400	49.2	478,400	20.4	711,100	30.4
¹ No-Till – A procedure whereby a crop is planted directly into a seedbed not tilled since harvest of a previous crop, or the planting of a crop into sod, previous crop stubble, or a cover where only the intermediate seed zone is disturbed. ² Other Conservation Tillage – Tillage practices prior to planting which result in a minimum of 30 percent ground cover or residue being retained on the surface following planting. Grass and weed control is accomplished primarily with herbicides. Includes ridge till, strip till, and mulch till. ³ Conventional Till – Systems where 100 percent of the surface is mixed or inverted by plowing, power tilling, or multiple disking. ⁴ Sum of no-till, other conservation tillage and conventional till percents of total may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. ⁵ Wheat seeded the previous fall for all intended purposes including grain, cover, silage, hay or any other utilization. ⁶ Total excludes Alfalfa Seedings. ⁷ New alfalfa seeded or to be seeded during 2007. ⁸ Alfalfa seeded acres available in January 2008. ⁹ Includes alfalfa seedings published January 11, 2008.							